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Leza L Olson 11/02/2006 09:39:20 AM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

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Text:

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 04354

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INFO: POL DAO DCM AMB

DISSEMINATION: PD
CHARGE: PROG

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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 8123
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 2375
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 4274
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 4906
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RHMFIUU/COMSOCEUR SOJ35 VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 TEL AVIV 004354

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL

PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Yediot reported that that US Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte is scheduled to arrive in Israel on Wednesday after visiting Egypt. According to the paper Negroponte's visit has nothing to do with the Hamas delegation that came to Cairo to negotiate the release of Israeli abducted soldier Gilad Shalit. According to the paper, Negroponte will meet with top security figures and the prime minister. Yediot also cites estimations among Israelis that the US will soon try to restart a diplomatic process.

Israel Radio reported that US top envoys Elliot Abrams and David Welsh are scheduled to arrive in Israel on Wednesday in order to prepare Prime Minister Olmert's visit to Washington later this month. According to the Jerusalem Post Iran will be the top agenda in the meeting between PM Olmert and US President George Bush.

Israel Radio reported on an IDF operation in Beit Hanun in the Northern Gaza Strip. The radio reported that according to Palestinian sources six Palestinians were killed and forty were wounded. But according to IDF sources 9 Palestinians were killed and over 50 were wounded; the sources were quoted as saying that the operation is expected to last several days. The radio also reported that the IDF massed dozens of armored vehicles close to southern Gaza late Tuesday, and the army called on residents of a part of the southern Gaza town of Rafah to evacuate their homes.

Kol Israel radio reported that the security cabinet met on Wednesday in order to discuss possible actions in Gaza. The IDF's expected suggestion was to expand the operation in Gaza including to take over the Philadelphi Route. According to radio reports after speaking to several participants in the meeting, it was decided to continue pinpoint operations in Gaza (similar to what is done today in Beit Hanun) against Hamas and other terrorist groups. According to one account from the meeting, new security cabinet participant Avigdor Lieberman offered to adopt the Russian model in Chechnya in the Gaza Strip.

Leading media quoted Hizbullah chief Hassan Nasrallah as saying that negotiations on a prisoner exchange deal involving captured Israel Defense Forces soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser have begun. According to Nasrallah the talks are conducted through a UN mediator.

The Jerusalem Post reported on a UN report indicating that Syria was smuggling arms to Hizbullah in Lebanon. The paper quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Marc Regev as saying that if Lebanon cannot implement its side of UNSC resolution 1701, then Israel will rethink its side of the bargain.

All media reported on IAF flights over Lebanon yesterday. The media noted that according to Lebanese sources the Lebanese army fired back towards the planes. Sources from the IAF were quoted as saying that the planes were on an intelligence-gathering mission. Israel has said that it will continue to fly over Lebanon until the abducted soldiers are returned home and UNSC resolution 1701 is implanted fully. The media reported that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited the headquarters of the Galilee Division in Biranit in northern Israel. In his visit, he said that Hizbullah is no longer

a threat to Israel.

Hatzofe reported that the UN Special Envoy to the Middle East Terje Larsen, in charge of matters concerning Lebanon, is working to prepare a plan for an Israeli withdrawal from the area known by Hizbullah as the "Shaba Farms." According to the paper Larsen's activity is in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which Israel has adopted.

All media reported that in his meeting with members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, GOC Southern Command Yoav Gallant told them that in a short while, Hamas will have a force of several thousand gunmen in the Gaza Strip. Gallant also warned that Hamas gunmen are equipped with modern weaponry and are capable of fighting as anti-tank missile or commando units.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Defense Minister Peretz as saying that if Gilad Shalit is released it could jump start the peace process with the Palestinians. The media also cited Peretz's statement that the Saudi initiative could serve as a basis for negotiations. Yediot noted that there is a difference of opinion between Peretz and Olmert on the issue and that the Prime Minister's Bureau rejected Peretz's statements, saying, "The Saudi initiative has to be read carefully in order to realize that it is not a basis for renewing negotiations. The initiative speaks of a return to the 1967 borders and the return of refugees to Israel, and this is not something that Israel can accept."

Yediot reported that Hamas is demanding that the Red Cross will be a part of the deal to release Shalit in fear that Israel backs off its obligations after the soldier is released.

Yediot reported that the settlers have decided to evacuate some of the illegal houses supposed to be destroyed in order to show good will to Defense Minister Peretz when negotiating the destiny of the inhabitant outposts.

Maariv reported that after the publication in the media regarding the decision that none of the four commanders of the divisions who fought in the war in Lebanon will lose their jobs and the ensuing anger in the public, especially among bereaved family's who lost their sons during the war, Defense Minister Peretz is considering to freeze some of the appointments.

All media reported that President Moshe Katzav was hospitalized for medical tests after feeling chest pains. He was released home after no illness was found.

111. Mideast:

Summary:

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "As Israel grapples with the challenges on its northern and southern borders, its conceptual overhaul can no longer credibly accommodate the notion of overwhelming reliance on outside forces to provide protection."

Block Quotes:

"The Problem with Foreign Forces"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (11/01):
"There is no mistaking the worrying similarity between the challenges that beset Israel on its borders with Lebanon and Gaza. Both were sites of unilateral Israeli withdrawals, followed almost instantaneously by reinforcement of the most fanatical terrorist organizations Israel faces.... In both cases, Israel, pulling back to international border lines, hoped it could rely on neighboring forces and the international community to ensure those borders were respected: UN forces and the Lebanese army in Lebanon, Egyptian forces along the Philadelphi Corridor that separates Egypt from the Gaza Strip, and various other international players. In both cases, such hopes have been dashed, and any expectation of a change for the

better is being dashed too.... As Israel grapples with the challenges on its northern and southern borders, its conceptual overhaul can no longer credibly accommodate the notion of overwhelming reliance on outside forces to provide protection."

12. Iran:

Summary:

Columnist Michael Freund wrote a letter to President George Bush in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Hence, I am writing to you because I am convinced that you alone understand and appreciate the gravity of the current situation, and I pray in my heart that you will not let it stand. I appeal to you now ... Please strike Iran hard with military force, and dismantle its nuclear weapons program, before it is too late."

Foreign news editor Arik Bachar wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Less than a billion dollars dazzle the Russian eyes, enough in order to sell a mass-destruction ability to a country that threatens to demolish the Jews. Damn it! even the Nazis paid more."

Block Quotes:

1I. "An Appeal of Faith to President Bush"

Columnist Michael Freund wrote a letter to President George Bush in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (11/01): "Dear Mr. President, I am writing to you because I am afraid. I have been closely following the rhetoric of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over the past few months, and I want you to know that I am gripped with a sense of fear. I fear for the future of Israel and for that of the entire Jewish people.... I fear for the future of the West, because outside of Washington, few and far between are the leaders with the common sense and courage to stand up to the Tyrant of Teheran. And I fear for the future of the world, because if Iran's fundamentalists get their hands on a nuclear weapon, it will only be a matter of time before their extremist allies abroad become similarly armed. Hence, I am writing to you because I am convinced that you alone understand and appreciate the gravity of the current situation, and I pray in my heart that you will not let it stand. I appeal to you now ... Please strike Iran hard with military force, and dismantle its nuclear weapons program, before it is too late. I know you believe, as I do, that God guides the destiny of men and of nations. And I know you believe, just as I do, that He raised you up to the helm of power precisely at this critical period, to serve as His agent and His instrument in this world.... The United Nations is a lost cause, and we have no faith in Russia, China or international institutions. The sad fact is that most of the world will not shed a tear if Mr. Ahmadinejad succeeds in achieving his dreadful aims. Here in Israel, our own leadership is tired and weak.... There is only one person now, Mr. President, who can stop this terrifying scenario from coming to pass, and I believe that person is you.... I will be praying for you, as will many others, and I hope that you take this message to heart. Be strong, be strong, Mr. President, and through you, may we all be strengthened."

II. "For a Handful of Rubles"

Foreign news editor Arik Bachar wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (11/01): "The time has come that we stop being surprised by our friends sitting in the Kremlin. The Russian leaders do not love us more than they love the Rubles that flow into their treasury. They sold weapons that killed our soldiers in Lebanon and now, according to reports, they have managed to arrange themselves a USD 800 million deal -- completing the first nuclear reactor on Iranian land -- in return for consent of soft sanctions on Iran's atomic military plan. Less than a billion dollars dazzles Russian eyes, enough in order to sell a mass-destruction ability to a country that threatens to demolish the Jews. Damn it! even the Nazis paid more.... The Russians are simply not our friends and it is not only because we are good friends with America. Russia misses its Empire reputation that it lost and one of the ways to get it back is to

gain a fortune, even in sleazy deals with Israel's enemies that threaten to destroy it."

JONES